

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
March 21, 2016

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:08 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton and P. DeBlock were present, R. Baglia (CCE) and K. Sumner, N. Meyer and C. DeGrootd (OCSWCD).

2016-3-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to approve February's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

- The District had excess liability insurance added on to its existing SIDLE Insurance Policy. This additional insurance was required by the NYSDEC Flood Bureau in order to make our permit for the Wallkill Bench Project valid. Our policy will now cover up to an additional \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence along with the original \$1 million. The cost of this additional insurance is \$650.00 for the remainder of the policy term. The DEC already waived the permit fees but would not waive the insurance fee. The Board had agreed to pay this between meetings. This payment has been added on to the Bills To Be Paid list for this month.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Statements from the District's banks were received.
- The most recent Ag & Farmland Protection Board Agenda and Meeting Minutes from February were passed around for review.

(J. Heller, NRCS, joined the Meeting at 9:14 AM)

- A few months ago, Sumner received a call from a local organic vegetable farmer who uses land in the Chester muck area, regarding a development going in on Route 94 towards Blooming Grove. This development drains into the black dirt and the farmer has concerns over what may get into the water. He had requested that Sumner come and inspect it, which Sumner did. Sumner then suggested to him that he contact the Ag & Farmland Protection Board. Sumner told the farmer that if the farmer was able to set up a meeting between the Village and the Developer that he (Sumner) would participate. The farmer is currently claiming that the development site is dumping sediment into the ditches all the way down to the pumping plant. Sumner suggested to him that he take photos of this. Discussion followed.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- **2016-3-2 Keeton moved to accept the Financial Report, DeBlock seconded. All in favor.**
- Sumner reviewed the list of Bills to Be Paid with the Directors. #4 on the list was overtime pay that Sumner offered to Meyer for assisting with teaching the 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control course on March 9th. This course was taught after normal business hours. #5 is for Richard Hoyt who has been working with Sumner on the Wallkill Tree Cutting contract. #8 on the list was for Vellenga's Lawn Care towards the Wallkill Maintenance Project. One of the culverts to access the tree cutting site was in need of repair and was uncrossable. Vellenga was hired to repair this. The District gave notice to the NYS DEC that this was going to be repaired.
- **2016-3-3 Wright made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. All in favor.**
- February's Grant Update report was reviewed.

STAFF REPORTS

- DeGrootd
 - The Annual County audit went well.
 - DeGrootd participated in an Internet Fraud Webinar on March 9th.
 - The 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Course participants, taught by Sumner and Meyer, had their wallet cards sent out last week.
 - DeGrootd has been working on the Ag NPS Round 22 Walkkill grant proposal.

- Meyer
 - Meyer attended this year's New York State Conservation District Employees Association's Water Quality Symposium, held in Syracuse at the Crowne Plaza. Some classes he took included an AEM class, where he had a Tier 3A plan reviewed and approved and a class on hydrology.
 - Meyer has been working on the Ag NPS Round 22 Walkkill grant proposal.
 - Meyer has been assisting Sumner with the Walkkill Bench Project.
 - Sumner and Meyer taught the NYS DEC 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Course on March 9th at the Local 17 Laborer's Union in Newburgh, NY.
 - The third planting site for the RSR EBP grant will be sometime this spring along Dolsontown Road in Middletown, NY. This is the final planting for the grant and will finish it out.
 - Meyer brought a leather dog collar, made by his business, to the Water Quality Symposium for their raffle. The Board agreed to reimburse Meyer \$20.00 for it, which is listed on the Bills To Be Paid.

- Sumner
 - Ag NPS RD 22 Grant Proposals are due April 1, 2016. Will be discussed further under New Business.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- R. Baglia of Cornell Cooperative Extension
 - The Stormwater Management Training Series continues on Thursday, March 24th from 8:30-4:30 PM. This class will be "Retrofits and Redevelopment: The New Frontiers". The next class, "Helping Hands for MS4s", is being offered on April 28, 2016.

- J. Heller of Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Heller was away on a four month work detail working with the organic policy advisor on developing training for NRCS employees. They hosted a pilot training on organic farming with representatives from eight states attending. The power point presentation that they pulled together along with other materials is proposed to be bundled up into a webinar. They are looking to have organic champions in within each state. There are approximately 22,000 certified organic farms in the nation.
 - There were six contracts put into EQIP for 2016.
 - A News Release was passed out on irrigation opportunities in Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Ulster, Orange and Rockland Counties.

OLD BUSINESS

- Pelletizer Project – Wright asked for an update on the Pelletizer Project. As far as Sumner knows, it's still being leased by Tantillos in Ulster County. The RC&D is looking at their options for donating or selling the equipment. Sumner has been pushing to donate it to an educational institution. SUNY

Cobleskill has some interest in accepting the equipment and they were a huge partner in the initial concept development and equipment assembly. There may be ramifications if it is donated.

- There are no updates on a new District Director.
- Wallkill Flood Project
 - The tree cutting that had to be completed by March 31st is on schedule. Some of the areas along the river already have narrow benches, and in some cases the benches are close to what the final design bench is going to be. Sumner said that if there are trees in those areas, let's identify them and keep them. It will not detract from the functioning of the project. Processing the tree tops is next. The cost for chipping them will be very high. Burning the leftover woody material was discussed, but given numerous concerns this option was ruled out. When proposals for the tree cutting were obtained, they included chipping as a separate cost item, so Sumner will go back to the low bidder on the chipping and see if he is interested.
 - Flood Plain Bench Project - There was discussion on the execution of conservation easements for the land that will become the Bench. Sumner has been meeting with the Fords discussing both the lands that will be used for the bench and the potential use of their adjacent fields for utilization of the excavated soil. Sumner estimates that there will be approximately four acres of the Ford's land used for the bench that is outside an existing NYSDEC easement. Discussion followed on the District obtaining comparable land prices per acre. There was also a discussion on land rental. If we want to have an expansive area available to use for the soil, we need to make decisions quickly on whether or not they should put crops on that land this year. Sumner has been discussing with the Fords the possibility of keeping 100 to 150 acres out of 2016 production, and what compensation would be fair. Sumner thinks some open test pits need to be done to better confirm the material that we're going to be dealing with. Sumner has been seeking proposals from surveyors to do a detailed topographic survey of Ford's land with one foot contours so we will know exactly how much soil should go where and to have the potential to develop more of a precision grading surface drainage system. He received two proposals from local surveyors: a verbal proposal from LAN Associates which was a little over \$20,000.00 and one from Alpine Environmental for \$19,400.00. He received one proposal from someone upstate, Weiss Engineering for \$6,350.00, whom would be doing the survey with a robotic total station.

Sumner will need help with the Conservation Easement procedures. Wright suggested seeking an estimate from Richard Hoyt for coordinating. There are numerous issues that are both time-sensitive and inter-related. For example, we need to make planting decisions with the Ford's, but don't want to incur lost-crop compensation expenses if all other necessary preparations cannot be made for construction this year. The Board agreed to proceeding with the detailed survey of the Ford property using Weiss, and Sumner will contact Hoyt to discuss proceeding with the Conservation Easement matters.

Sumner has discussed a proposed time table with Buckman from B&L. The goal is to have a bid package ready for Board review/approval at the April Board meeting, release the RFP and leave it open for a month, shoot for being construction-ready by July 1st.

(J. Heller, NRCS, left the Meeting at 10:55 AM)

- Celery Avenue Project – B&L had been previously authorized to work on this. We may be able to release both RFP's, and evaluate our options after reviewing what comes in.

(R. Baglia, CCE, left the Meeting at 11:37 AM)

- There was a brief discussion on the District hiring someone to move no-till equipment to assist Meyer.

NEW BUSINESS

- Update on enclosed trailer – The District’s new enclosed trailer is ready to be picked up. No action has been taken on selling the old open trailer. The District will try to get reimbursed for the new trailer by the Town of Wallkill through the EBP RSR grant.
- The corn monitor and planting units were delivered to the District office and need to be put back on the equipment.
- An Ag NPS Resolution for the Round 18 Time Extension Request was presented for approval and the Chairman’s signature. **2016-3-4 Keeton made the Motion, seconded by DeBlock to approve the round 18 Time Extension Request and to have the Chairman sign the Resolution. All in favor.**
- Ag NPS Round 22 Moodna and Wallkill Grant Proposals – Meyer reviewed the two proposals with the Board. The Moodna proposal includes one farm and the total amount requested from the State is \$33,400.00. The Wallkill proposal includes 10 farms and the amount requested is \$337,755.00. The round 22 resolution, which covers both Proposals, was presented for approval and the Chairman’s signature. **2016-3-5 A Motion was made by Wright, seconded by DeBlock to approve the round 22 Proposals and to have the Chairman sign the Resolution. All in favor.**
- Bridges To Opportunity – This is a new service that the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering to help customers connect to the services they need. It is a software application that combines resources offered by national, state and local agricultural organizations to help farmers start, improve or expand their operations. The FSA has asked the District to become a partner. **2016-3-6 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, that the District signs on as a partner to the Bridges to Opportunity. All in favor.**

The **NEXT MEETING** is scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2016 at 9:00 AM.

2016-3-7 Meeting adjourns at 12:22 PM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Secretary to the Board